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WORLD ORDER

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RELIGION THE MUSIC OF LIFE

MUSIC is the form of spiritual energy which can penetrate a number of levels of being with a dominating power concealed in delicate beauty. Upon the rational mind, if sufficiently attentive, it traces a mathematical design. Within the soul it evokes moods and transforms attitudes. When soul, mind and sense are in union, it creates the dance. To the dancer, music brings the fulfilment of being. Its rhythmic pulse evokes in physical and spiritual movement a response to a higher power which exalts complete captivity to the condition of truest freedom. Seeking to become one with the music, the dancer transcends himself. The pattern traced by his body is but the visible similitude of subtler patterns woven within his aspiring inner self.

A deaf person beholding the dancer can never grasp the motive of his physical response nor ascend the spiral flight of consciousness to the begetting rhythm that has created the power of design in a discordant world. From his steadfast silence he attains no awareness of the music. The motive he attributes can never embrace the reality of the dancer's experience.

That willing captivity is the valid image of spiritual experience in the life of faith. Religion is the music of life. Those who are touched by its supernal beauty worship by an endeavor to respond, and their quality of response is a mystery eluding unfaith at every point.

Religion is that symphony sounded from a realm on high whose instruments are men. The lover of God finds himself part of an orchestra. Captive to the rhythm revealed beyond all sullen discord and all sterile silence, he realizes utter freedom in his immersion within its ordered beauty and knows fullest liberty in his association with the others of the orchestra, that union of diverse instruments in the perfect oneness of revealed reality.

Eternal is the melody of truth, eternal the orchestra of faith, though of its members many pass through the gate of martyrdom and all pass through the door of physical death. No reflection of earth, no refinement of the world is that symphony of truth. Its energy is superhuman and

its pattern is the nature of heaven ever more fully revealed.

Religion has no worship save the exaltation of being in the captivity that bestows endless freedom. Unfaith has no substitute for the worship emanating from conscious response, though it build altars of gold and gleaming ruby, and multiply churches in all cities of all lands. Unfaith warns of awe for the written notes but stops men's ears to the music. Unfaith weaves a silken case for the instrument but snaps the strings that quiver to respond.

With philosophy we have muffled the hearing ear of the soul; with morality we have rewritten the sacred, flaming symphony in the discordant tones of worldly business and politics. What the world calls worship is a marble cenotaph raised over the bones of Him who for a brief life on earth was the music, and fleeing to the world of spirit continues the symphony for those who were quickened and attuned.

The man of faith reveals the effect of an energy whose source and cause bewilders, disturbs and angers the man of unfaith to whom mystery makes the supreme challenge of fear. The symphony of faith denies the discords of the world, and that denial is the obliteration of the reality of the men of discord.

Hence must the men of discord carry ravage and ruin through the nations. They consume in malicious fire the very pillars of civilization. They destroy culture, they overthrow altars, their anger levels the works of men to the elemental earth. But that which they ravage is not the means of worship, nor can their bitter physical flame penetrate to the capacity of faith to be captive to an unearthly power.

Symphony and discord are simultaneous in time but can never be coeval in reality. They are coincident in place, but never commingle in their essence. Though anger rule from the throne of Caesar, its dominion is restricted to the realm of darkness and its authority ends at the boundary of the love of God.

"Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart," Bahá'u'lláh has cried above the discord of this troubled age, "and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, and mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being. . . .

"Then will the manifold favor and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest mysteries of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. He will discover in all things the mysteries of Divine Revelation, and the evidences of an everlasting Manifestation."

Peace and inner assurance descend to the soul aspiring upward to the Music of Divine Peace. Peace augments among men as men realize their diversity contains a majestic harmony celebrating the One, the All.

H. H.

THE ONENESS OF RELIGION

DORIS McKAY

I.

THE VOICE OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS

PRIMITIVE man, for all his limitations knew *awe,* a quality which modern man has lost: primitive man, his intellect still unawakened, had the gift of wonder. He wondered at the sense of Presence that came with dawns, high winds, incoming tides, birth and death. There was a Force more powerful than his own hands, more fleet than his running footsteps. There was a spirit that decreed light and darkness, and knew the secret of fire before man stumbled upon it. Man, groping in intellectual half-light, personalized this force. Animism and pantheism were the results of his deductions from cause and effect.

Then the Voice of the Ancient of Days began to make Itself heard. It did not speak out of a cloud for all to fall face-downward and die in their terror, but to one man at a time. Here and there throughout the darkness of history some man heard God and told what He had said. To Zoroaster, Ahura-Mazda, (the Glory of God) said:

"My Name is I Am . . . I am the Keeper, I am the Creator and Maintainer; I am the Discerner; I am the Most Beneficent Spirit!"

And to Moses the Voice said,

"I Am That I Am. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am (Jehovah) hath sent me unto you . . . This is My Name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations."

In another part of the world the Voice raised again through Krishna has been brought down to us in the Bhagavad Gita;

"Know thou this, O Prince, that whenever the world declineth in virtue and righteousness; and vice and injustice mount the throne — then come I, the Lord, and revisit My world in visible form, and mingle as a man with men, and by my influence and teachings do I destroy the evil and injustice, and reestablish virtue and righteousness. Many times have I thus appeared; many times hereafter

shall I come again."

So faith in an Ancient Being became a legend, not in one part of the world but in many. There came to be an accumulated literature of the sayings of this Voice, a passed along tradition of His ways of coming.

It is man's tragedy that, even as the untrained intellects of the growing race had proved inadequate in dealing with the idea of God in Nature, so did superstitions and half-truths creep into their interpretations of the words and situations which God had left. One was a regional difficulty: God's revelation to a selected people was "final," a culmination of all the remarks of God, until some prophetic time when the prophet, Himself, the Holy One, should come again in person. Another was the superstition that the prophet became God: the belief in the Incarnation. This had its reason in the fact that the Unknown Beneficent Power had borrowed, as it were, the personality of Him Who seemed to speak. The Power possessed Him, used Him, acted in Him like electricity in a dynamo, said I Am, but still was not identified with Him Whom God manifested. The people called God Him instead of It after they had seen one or another of the Men of God—true, the Ancient of Days had indeed personified, and the appellation would have been correct had they clearly understood that "He" meant God speaking on the human throne, and that He spoke while the throne kept silence. *"For I spake not from myself"* said Jesus, *"but the Father that hath sent me, He hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."*

The tendency to fallacy was heightened by the fact that it was but seldom that religion was renewed. As whole centuries rolled around since the phenomenon of the appearance of God in a human temple had occurred, men would forget, or develop strange distortive dogmas, more especially since the ancient holy books were hoarded by the priests, and the knowledge of reading belonged but to a few. We know that the people before the coming of Abraham, and Moses, and Christ, and Muhammad, had relapsed again into forms of paganism, imagining an incarnation of the Divine Being in the life about them and in the idols that they built with their own hands of materials from the mineral and vegetable worlds. With the Voice obscured by time, there has seemed little innate in man's individual intelligence capable of coping with the fact called God.

Up until Muhammad every prophet had to deal with these decadent paganistic practices. Muhammad's teachings made possible the investigation of natural laws and the rise of science by freeing His followers from a fear of natural forces, thus also dealing a death blow to animism. Forgetfulness of the Almighty in our day expresses itself in a higher form of pantheism consistent with the conceptions of the Greeks in the time of Plato and certain Muhammadan and Christian mystics in the worship or enhancement of the Self, called the God Within, as defined by a diluted form of God-incarnation—an identification vigorously disclaimed by the founders of the world's religions for themselves, let alone for their fol-

lowers. Those with such a belief are referred to by Bahá'u'lláh as "those who have joined partners with God."

Muhammad calling for witness the stars in their courses played upon the primitive sensitiveness of His desert followers. Today we have learned how to make telescopes but we have lost touch with the stars. A device called the seismograph has robbed even the earthquake of our wonder. Those who are not aware of the Hour would call this the midnight of the Day of God. Yet, God or not—God is in the very fiber of human consciousness the world over. Man holds to some kind of a belief in God or he despairs. But the effectiveness of this God-consciousness is lacking as the near wreckage of a civilization warns us. It is because our bonds with the essential Wisdom is broken—as is our bond with nature. It is as if some Secret of Being had become obscured; or as if a Spring had been hidden beneath leaves while the pilgrims fainted with thirst.

THE marvel of it is that in our day of machines and machine-personalities the Ancient Beauty has come and has spoken again in unmistakeable accents. The same signs of Godhead are there; the same significant Appearance, through Bahá'u'lláh; the same assertion that God has spoken through a chosen Messenger, and the Messenger's testimony to that truth; there are the same authoritative statements in regard to the social adjustments which fit the age; the same poetry and mystery and power; the same sacrifice of the material welfare of the Messenger as an earnest of His sincerity in His Mission.

"Let thine ear be attentive," Bahá'u'lláh admonishes us, "to the Voice of the Ancient of Days, crying to thee from the Kingdom of His all-glorious Name. He it is Who is now proclaiming from the realms above, and within the inmost essence of all created things: *'I truly am God, there is none other God but Me. I am He Who, from everlasting hath been the Source of all sovereignty and power, He Who shall continue, throughout eternity, to exercise His kingship and extend His protection unto all created things. My proof is the greatness of My might and My sovereignty that embraceth the whole of creation.'* "

The declaration of the renewal of religion in this age cannot be set aside as superstition. The scientific method of ascertaining truth looks at effects: it marks the evidence of evolution whether in progressive social theory, or in the maturing of human character. The religions of the past have found a lasting place in modern man's innermost soul by one means alone—by their fruits. The young tree of the new appearance of religion in our own day is radiant with bloom. It has stood resilient and unbroken before the winds of such tests as would have uprooted a lesser organism. It bids fair to spread its foliage over all mankind and to nourish the multitude upon its wonderful fruits.

STEPS TO PEACE

GRACE A. LAND

BELIEVING the admonitions in the writings of the prophets must have some foundation, my life has been a search for the key which would open the door to the sesame of truth. Many times I had been told the Teacher would appear who would direct me and lead me along the way. Going from one to another and joining one organization and another, I thought I was seeking and perhaps I did gather some truth from each, but the one which awakened my thought to more earnest seeking had been introduced to me in my history class at school. The martyrdom of the Báb and the death of Bahá'u'lláh impressed me profoundly. Many years passed before I was led to read the teachings of these holy men. Their teachings have been gathered together and compiled in various books by their followers.

Inspired by these teachings I have looked within myself to find the thoughts I entertain and send out bring to me happiness or trouble, health or ill health. Evil thoughts are my enemies, and I am responsible for them. As I engender thought through emotion awakened by outside stimulus and desires nurtured by my environment I become aware of the influence on my body.

By my thoughts, therefore, I am growing a tree of good or evil. I am growing to God, life; or evil, dead life.

Good heals and inspires. Dead life hurts and retards. Humanity is inclined toward going to extremes, and I am no exception today as one of the thrill seekers, unless I conquer the tendency, I am hardening my bones and tissues, thereby making growth stop.

If I grieve because some desire is not accomplished or I am separated from family or friends and I do not therefore consume food with relish or at proper intervals, thereby depriving my body of the necessary fuel, preventing the heart, lungs, stomach, liver, and kidneys from performing their functions, the blood is not nourished, in consequence, with albumen, oil, oxygen and water.

Allowing this lack of nourishment to take place one of the organs becomes diseased which warns me the

white gluttons are being set free from the spleen and I must do something about preventing their advance throughout the tissues, otherwise dead life will overcome me. My lungs may become the seat of trouble. When I worry or allow myself to become excited or strained, my kidneys cease to function properly. Should I read bad news I would become dejected and my heart would be the sufferer, but when my heart beats are increased with joy, all is well. Although extreme joy or sorrow affects the heart beats detrimentally.

Extremes, therefore, affect the most vital organ, my dividing pump (the heart) which sends out arterial blood and collects venous blood throughout the body.

Again, over-eating is quite as detrimental an extreme to my well being as under-eating. I create more sulphur than the body is able to throw off in its use of energy. That is, more heat and fire creates more energy. Then, indeed, do I create hell or hades for myself. I am uncomfortable, much or little according to the tension on the circulation of the blood which I am making by the kind of thoughts I am, at the time, maintaining.

My thoughts may be obstructing the respiratory system then my blood would not be fed with air from the arteries and the venous blood would retain the carbon dioxide in it. My thoughts would be checking growth or motion.

From Bahá'u'lláh's teachings in the Seven Valleys, He says, "Dost thou think thy body is a small thing, while in thee is enfolded the universe?"

And 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the prophet, says, "The test of existence is motion. An object which has in itself the power of motion lives. If motion is withheld growth ceases. That is mortality."

Thoughts, winged instigators of action, travel through the nerves from the main centers in the brain to the solar plexus in the region of the stomach where the fluids received into it start on their journey through the body, entering the twelve nerve plexuses of the various organs of function.

The thoughts received in these centers may act as leaves from healing herbs, relaxing and promulgating growth, or they may take on the proportions of an octopus, making the nerve plexuses contract and squeeze, kill or choke, life in the organs, thereby preventing function and keeping out the rarefied substance, oxygen or air, which helps to set free heat and energy from the digesting food.

By entertaining unkind thoughts, therefore, I live on nervous energy only, which is not being replenished since I am choking the sources of nourishment by my thoughts. Finally, the dynamo (the solar plexus) runs out and my nerves have no more power to motivate. Consequently, my body must remain where it has last placed itself until assisted to renourish the dynamo.

Realizing that my wrong thinking is the cause of my discomfort and lack of motive power I change my thoughts to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who says,

"Turning the face toward God brings healing to the body, the mind and the soul."

"When we speak of the soul we

mean the motive power of this physical body which lies under its entire control in accordance with its dictates.

"If the soul identifies itself with the material world it remains dark, for in the natural world there is corruption, aggression, greed, darkness, transgression and vice. If the soul remains in this station and moves along these paths it will be the recipient of this darkness; . . . but, if it becomes the recipient of the graces of the world of mind, its darkness will be transformed into light, its tyranny into justice, its ignorance into wisdom, its aggression into loving kindness; until it reaches the apex."

"Then there will not be any struggle for existence.

"Man will become free from egotism; he will be released from the material world, he will become the personification of justice and virtue, for a sanctified soul illumines humanity and is an honor to mankind, conferring life upon the children of men, and suffering all nations to attain to the station of perfect unity. Therefore we can apply the name, 'Holy soul' to such a one."

And in Bahá'u'lláh's further teachings:—

"Deprive not yourselves of that which has been created for you. . . . It is incumbent upon you that exultation and glad tidings be manifest in your faces."

HAVING adjusted my thoughts, the body functions according to its proper equilibrium and my choice of substances for its nourishment are influenced by this new adjustment. More natural and finer foods are my nourishment which affects the quality of the resultant body. Foods are the best medicines.

Grain, fruits, vegetables, nuts, milk, cheese, butter, eggs, chocolate (not cocoa) furnish the basis upon which the air we breathe performs its chemical action and thereby creates the little house of energy for us to use.

Phosphorous vegetables and fruits particularly nourish brain cells. Pineapples, grapes, leaves of vegetables, beans, all kinds of fish (unspiced). The heart and lungs particularly need milk, cheese, butter, grains and fruits.

The muscles and nerve plexuses which furnish the motor power are nourished when given honey, molasses, chocolate (not cocoa) nuts and eggs.

The starches from bread, potatoes, bananas, and honey, burn in the body, yielding heat and power,—fats of meat and butter also afford heat and energy but they are in a more concentrated form.

Through this balance of foods and a required amount of rest (six hours at least) and exercise, work or play, the nerve plexuses become finer and tuned to higher vibrations. The ear hears better, the eyes perceive more, the intellectual sparks are increased. The whole body, therefore, responds to higher vibrations from the air it breathes and the balance of food consumed by it.

The use of alcohol in whatever form dissolves the most important and nourishing oil of the body. Excessive acid condition also will do the same thing.

Moderation, equilibrium, balance, is the law of nature.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in His tablets tells us; "Health, strength, and intellectual enjoyment, penetration of judgment and physical vigor are increased when the use of tobacco, wine and opium are decreased.

"All that has been created is for man, who is at the apex of creation, and he must be thankful for the divine bestowals.

"All material things are for us, so through our *gratitude* we may learn to understand life as a divine benefit.

"If we are disgusted with life we are ingrates, for our material and spiritual existences are the outward evidence of the divine mercy. Therefore, we must be happy and spend our time in praises, appreciating all things."

BATHING daily regulates my food supply. This keeps the little drain tubes open in my skin so the steam set free through the process of digestion may escape. These little tubes are the safety valves. When they become clogged the fat and oil collect under them which is likely to increase my weight. Also the drain tubes keep the body temperature under control. Winter or summer the body registers the same in whatever part of the earth I may be living. Bahá'u'lláh admonishes us in the following:-

"Be the essence of cleanliness among mankind . . . under all circumstances conform yourselves to refined manners . . . let no trace of uncleanliness appear on your clothes . . . immerse yourselves in pure water; a water which hath been used is not allowable . . . Verily we have desired to see you the manifestation of Paradise on earth so there may be diffused from you that whereat the hearts of the favored ones shall rejoice."

And from a tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is written: "External cleanliness, although it is a physical thing, has great influences upon spirituality. . . . The fact of having a pure and spotless body exercises an influence upon the spirit of man."

When the body is attuned to higher vibrations through kindly thoughts and careful selection of food materials for its nourishment, life and motion take on new aspects. There is felt a balance or equilibrium. Contentment takes the place of unrest. Food is enjoyed in smaller quantities and the body assimilates the finer foods. The power of discrimination through the senses is enhanced. Sleep becomes a restorer and abnormal appetite for drugs and stimulants disappears.

When the blood carries a great amount of nourishment throughout the body the faculties are restored.

Healthy fatigue through exercise or well planned work insures complete rest in sleep. The body nourishment is complete, banishing thereby a liability to become discomforted or diseased and losing the required rate of motion in consequence. The spirit of youth or the youthful rate of motion remains, keeping in repair all the faculties. It is an abiding power inspiring progress and development.

WHAT is the reward? Why should I raise the vibrations of my body? Is it only to keep me in health? No. All people are part of the universal body. Those who belong to the head create material benefits for

the use of all people, such as, steamships, airships, submarines, telephones, radios, automobiles, heating plants, power by oil and motor, cooling systems. Some of them create amusements for people to enjoy.

The people belonging to other parts of the universal body serve the thinkers. Just as the head of the individual is served by other parts of the body. Consequently the higher I can make my body vibrate the more it is attuned to the vibrations sent out from the universal body from which I may obtain power to penetrate the truth or realness of life and thereby more efficiently serve humanity and myself. The things I enjoy I will take pleasure in more fully in consequence, and most assuredly some of the things I now enjoy will seem quite uninteresting and immaterial.

The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh through His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá have been translated for us and corroborate the possibility of this higher rate of vibration. The vision of understanding and comprehension is clarified. He says:-

"There is, however, a faculty in man which unfolds to vision the secrets of existence. It gives him a power whereby he may investigate the reality of every object.

"It leads man on and on to the luminous station of divine sublimity and frees him from all the fetters of self, causing him to ascend to the pure heaven of sanctity.

"This is the power of the mind, for the soul is not of itself capable of unrolling the mysteries of phenomena, but the mind can accomplish this, and therefore, it is a power superior to the soul.

"There is still another power which is differentiated from that of the soul and mind.

"This third power is the spirit which is an emanation from the divine bestower; it is the effulgence of the sun of reality; the radiation of the celestial world, the spirit of faith, the spirit His Holiness, the Christ, refers to when He says — 'Those that are born of the flesh are flesh, and those that are born of the spirit are spirit.'

"The spirit is the axis around which the eternal life revolves.

"It is conducive to everlasting glory and is the cause of the exaltation of humanity.

"In another instance His Holiness, the Christ, says — 'Whosoever has not received a portion of the spirit is as dead. Let the dead bury their dead.'

"This means that although the souls of humanity are living, yet if they are deprived of contact with the spirit they are as dead.

"In another place Christ says — 'You must be baptized with the spirit.'

"This spirit of faith is the plane of reality, the life of humanity and the cause of eternal illumination.

"It inspires man to attain the virtues and perfections of the divine world.

"May the radiant sea of reality become clear and unveiled of its clouds, may people become freed from the quagmires of the world of matter and soar upward to the city of light."

THE brain, then, tuned to the higher vibrations receives from the

universal mind the impetus to think. The kind of thinking is more or less suggested by the environment in which I find myself. The pressure of this impact is likely to force out the more apparently remote influence of the environment of the universal mind unless it is offset by prayer.

Prayer completes the circle which was started in the first part of this brief essay. Prayer completes the circle because the attitude of prayer is the state of relaxation necessary to growth. With a relaxed nervous system the twelve plexuses function freely and normally, thereby receiving the higher vibrations from the universal energetic source.

Putting myself in an attitude of prayer I receive into my spirit the assistance and power to solve my daily lessons or problems. This attitude of concentration continually practiced burns its way through to the answers I seek.

Prayer improves the quality of my spirit and makes of me a better representative and worker through whom the universal spirit may function. My physical existence becomes less important. My desire is to manifest God, the universal Spirit. God makes no mistakes.

'Abdu'l-Bahá explains in the following lines the way to pray: "The highest and most elevating state is the state of prayer. Prayer is communion with God. . . .

"The worshipper must pray with a detached spirit, unconditional surrender of the will, concentrated attention and spiritual passion.

"Automatic, formal prayers which do not touch the core of the heart are of no avail.

"How sweet, how delicious, how satisfying, how spiritual is the prayer in the middle of the night.

"While other eyes are closed, the eyes of the worshipper are wide open.

"While other ears are stopped, the ears of the suppliant are attuned to the subtle music of God.

"While others are fast asleep, the adorer of the Ideal Beloved is wakeful."

My body is my house and it is me. I keep it in order by thinking universal thoughts. That is, I look about me to see how my neighbor is faring as we whirl through space. Is he more miserable than I and can he help himself? Have I a thought or experience the benefit of which I may give him to solve his particular problems?

So, we gather together into congregations, sects, cliques, and parties when we have common interests or opinions. These divisions are parts of larger divisions, that is, nations, races and religions. So I find there are many more houses like me all breathing air made of the same elements and they eat food grown in the same brown earth as I do.

Their blood is like mine, then, and the cover of my house differs only in color according to where we live on this whirling planet which makes of us the whirled (world). Earth, water, fire and air we convert into houses for ourselves and return to these elements when we disseminate.

Customs, languages, and traditions separate us. By overcoming the difference of language I appreciate the

customs and traditions of each neighbor. And that is made possible by the study of Esperanto. For now is the time to accomplish, to weave our traditions and destinies.

'Abdu'l-Bahá writing on Divine Philosophy tells me why I should prefer my neighbor to myself—"As there is no one who has not his designated place in the world for there is nothing useless on this earth, we must treat each individual with respect and affection, for each is a sign of the divine favor and power—that power which has been able to draw such a being out of matter, make of him a creature with sensorial faculties and endow him with intellectual and spiritual potentiality.

"This is one of the visible proofs of a divine power. Let us respect these living proofs."

Continually building this healthful peace through discriminating thought and concentration is the one step toward the Most Great Peace of Bahá.

YET there is a third reality in man, the spiritual reality. Through its medium one discovers spiritual revelations, a celestial faculty which is infinite as regards the intellectual as well as physical realms. That power is conferred upon man through the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is an eternal reality, an indestructible reality, a reality belonging to the divine, supernatural kingdom; a reality whereby the world is illumined, a reality which grants unto man eternal life. This third, spiritual reality it is which discovers past events and looks along the vistas of the future. It is the ray of the Sun of Reality. The spiritual world is enlightened through it, the whole of the Kingdom is being illumined by it. It enjoys the world of beatitude, a world which had not beginning and which shall have no end.—'ABDU'L-BAHÁ.

ISLAM

ALI-KULI KHAN

V.

MUHAMMAD AT MEDINA

(JUNE A.D. 622-623)

MUHAMMAD and Abu Bekr fled toward Medina. On their way they met with Talha, the latter's cousin, who furnished them with new raiment. Talha returned to Medina some time after, with the families of the Prophet and Abu Bekr.

Medina (City of the Prophet)—the ancient Yathreb—was surrounded by green gardens and groves of stately palms. It was a delightful sight to behold! Before testing the friendship of the city, Muhammad ordered the guide to lead them to Koba, a suburb. The expectant city prepared to welcome Him. It was June 28, A.D. 622 when the weary travelers, amidst the greetings of friends, old and new, alighted and sat down under a tree. He lodged with Kulthum, a hospitable chief, who had already entertained many emigrants upon their arrival. A few days later Ali, who had been detained in Medina, joined the Prophet at his house.

Four days, from Monday till Friday, the Prophet stayed at Koba, where He laid the foundation of a mosque praised in the Qur'an as "the mosque of Godly-fear." On Friday He halted in the vale of the Beni Salim tribe, and performed the prayer with about one hundred Moslems, followed by the eulogy of Islam and religious exhortations. From that day, Friday was set aside as the Moslem holiday, for public worship.

His entry into the city was a triumphal procession, the chief men in gala dress and shining armor, lending glamor to the occasion. To avoid causing rivalry amongst the inhabitants, He did not choose any one's residence to arrive at. But in reply to the people's inquiry, He stated that the "decision rested with the camel." They made way for Him to go, and the camel (named Al Kaswa) moved on toward the eastern quarter of the city inhabited by the Beni an-Najjar;

and in a square with a few date trees, the camel halted and sat down. The owner was one Abu Eiyub, at whose house the Prophet and Abu Bekr resided some seven months, pending the completion of a house and mosque for His occupancy. He purchased the spot where the camel had halted, at ten gold pieces (paid by Abu Bekr) on which to build a mosque.

While at Abu Eiyub's, the Prophet was joined by His wife Sauda, and His daughters Fatima and Om Kalthum, who had been brought from Mecca by His son Zeid. Eighteen months after her arrival, Fatima was married to Ali.

Because of the humidity of the air, many of the emigrants suffered from fever, until Muhammad's prayer: "Lord! make Medina dear unto them, even as Mecca; even dearer. Bless its produce, and banish far from it the pestilence."

Medina is several thousand feet above the sea and is exposed to chilly winds from the eastern deserts. In winter the cold is severe, with occasional ice and snow.

To draw His followers closer together, He enjoined each to adopt another as a brother; himself setting the example by adopting Ali as His brother. A year and a half later, when it was no longer necessary it was abandoned so as not to complicate the law of inheritance.

Once one of these "brothers," who had two wives, divorced one of them so that Abdur Rahman, whom he had chosen for a "brother," could marry her. He likewise gave a portion of his wealth to him. And to encourage intermarriage between his followers and the new Medina converts, the Prophet allowed small dower. So when Abdur Rahman told the Prophet of his marriage and the latter asked, "For what dower?", he answered, "For a small gold piece the size of a date stone." "And why," replied the Prophet, "not a goat?"

The story illustrates the poverty of Abdur Rahman at that time in contrast with his vast wealth in after days. At his death, he left vast quantities of gold, 1000 camels, 3000 sheep and 100 horses.

THE first mosque and its minarets furnished the simple style of architecture which was applied to the erection of numerous mosques everywhere.

At this time Muhammad married A'isha, the daughter of Abu Bekr, who was the Prophet's only virgin bride. She was a favorite wife who maintained her supremacy in the Prophet's household to the very end.

Seven months after His arrival in Medina, the mosque and house were ready for occupancy.

Muhammad was then 53 years of age.

The people who migrated from Mecca to Medina with the Prophet were called "Muhajirin" or Refugees. The people of Medina who believed in Him were called Ansar or "Helpers" or "Allies." But since Muhammad made other converts in the Arab tribes, it would be better to call the former "citizens" or Men of Medina. The feuds between the Aus and Khazraj were forgotten since both became Moslems and the Faith required that all Moslems should regard each other

as brethren.

In a short time converts to Islam numbered several hundreds. Once Muhammad's authority over His followers was recognized, idolatry and skepticism in the community was suppressed. There were, however, certain dissatisfied and hypocritical elements amongst those who had pledged themselves to protect the Prophet. These were called the "Disaffected."

Muhammad next made a treaty of mutual obligation with the Jews confirming their right to practise their religion and to control their property.

Ill-will, however, increased between Muhammad and the Jews as Islam became daily more positive and exclusive. For He was a "greater Prophet" as foretold in their Book. And a Jew joining Muhammad would of necessity abandon his ancestral Faith. As for the Jews that were won over to his Faith, they were referred to as His "Witnesses," while those who remained unbelievers were stiff-necked descendants of those who had defied Moses, killed their prophets, and rejected the Messiah. Thus the Jews were a constant cause of annoyance and anxiety, as portions of the Qur'an revealed at this time are replete with invectives against them. It ended with Muhammad's decisive rejection of the Jews and the widening of the breach between them and Islam.

IN the first and second years of the Hegira the institution of the daily prayer was established, followed by preliminary Public prayers which were held on Fridays, and by a sermon by Muhammad. Some of the Moslem Jews were still permitted to attend both the Synagogue and the Mosque, even as Muhammad and His followers visited the Jewish places of worship.

In the second year, however, Jerusalem, the first Kibla, was changed by Muhammad to the Ka'aba, to which the Moslems were enjoined to turn at the time of prayer. The change in the Kibla was revealed in Sura II, verse 139. This mortified and estranged the Jews.

Circumcision, which was adopted as an institution of Islam, was an Abrahamic ceremony which had been current amongst the Arabs; and no verse in the Qur'an is revealed enjoining it.

Replacing the Jewish fast of the Atonement, the fast of Ramadan was revealed in the second year of the Hegira, or in December, 623 A.D., while the "breaking of the fast" called "Id-al-Fitr" was celebrated with the rising of the new moon of the following month.

Another great festival, the "Id-Al-Adha," or "day of sacrifice," was instituted for the month of "Dhu'l-Hijja." This was in 623 A.D., in March. But it was later shifted to correspond with the pilgrimage to Mecca in April, 624, A.D.

At first the call to prayer was a simple cry "To public prayer." But, with the change of the Kibla the Azan was established, which is the call by the muezzin: *"Great is the Lord! Great is the Lord! I bear witness that there is no God but the Lord; I bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of God Come unto prayer! Come unto salvation! God is Great! God is Great!*

There is no God but the Lord!"

In the great Mosque the limb of a date tree was planted for the Prophet to hold by. It was called the "Column of Hannana." The pulpit was held as especially sacred and oaths regarding matters in dispute were taken beside it. He who swore falsely by it, "even if the subject were as insignificant as a tooth-pick," was doomed to hell. When the post by the side of which the Prophet had so long prayed, was removed, it was buried beneath the pulpit. Tradition relates that when deserted, the post moaned loudly and only the Prophet, touching it with his hands, soothed its grief.

Muhammad was noted for the simplicity of His life, which contrasted with the splendor of a Caliph's court. But in that simplicity He laid a foundation which resulted in the worldwide glory of the reign of Islam.

Hostilities between Mecca and Medina. A.H. 1 and 2 — A.D. 623

The first six months of Hegira was a period of repose. But the Prophet's mind was to devise ways and means for the eventual conquest of Islam over Mecca. At first the citizens of Medina could not be depended upon to assist in the expansion of Islam outside their city, as the pledge given by them was the tender of defensive and not offensive help to the Prophet.

The trade caravans of Koreish from Mecca and At Ta'if which annually passed by Medina offered a vulnerable point of attack to the emigrants in the latter city. Leather and gums, spices and precious metals from Yemen and Mecca brought in exchange silk goods and articles of luxury from Gaza and other Syrian marts. Some of these caravans consisted of as many as 2,000 camels, with a freight worth 50,000 dinars. Sprenger estimates the annual export trade of Mecca to have been 250,000 dinars, with imports rising to the same amount, the profits being 50%. The caravans had often been attacked by hostile tribes. But now the offended Moslems who had been forced to flee to Medina found sufficient causes to attack the Meccan caravans.

Seven months after their arrival in Medina, Hamza, the Prophet's uncle, at the head of some thirty "refugees" was dispatched to surprise a Meccan caravan led by Abu Jahl, and guarded by three hundred Koreish. A chief of Beni Juheina, a confederate of both, prevented a pending struggle between both parties, and each retired to their respective destination.

About five months later, Muhammad sent a much stronger party, led by His cousin Obeida, in pursuit of another caravan led by Abu Sufyan and two hundred men. On that occasion, Obeida "shot the first arrow of Islam."

A month later, a third expedition was sent under Sa'd ibn Abi Wakkas (the great future general of Islam). But having failed to meet the caravan, they returned to Mecca. These expeditions occurred in the Winter and Spring. Upon each occasion, Muhammad would present a standard to each leader. Later in the same year, Muhammad Himself led three expeditions of a larger size, but none of these resulted in a decisive action. But it led to the conclusion of the first

treaty, reduced to writing, with a tribe connected with Mecca, which later proved of benefit to Muhammad.

Following another expedition by Muhammad, Kurz'ibn Jabir, a Bedawi chief, raided a flock of camels owned by Medina, near that city. But he soon was converted to Islam and became an ally.

A few months later Muhammad and two hundred volunteers went on a third expedition which, although it failed to meet a returning Koreish caravan, resulted in making new alliances with stronger Bedawi tribes.

The title "Father of dust," which is a favorite one to the Shi'ites, was on that occasion bestowed by Muhammad, who found Ali fallen asleep on dusty ground. He also appointed Ali, Hamza and Sa'd to carry his white standard, each by turn.

On one of these expeditions, a Moslem killed a Koreishite in one of the "sacred months" in which war was forbidden. In the Sura II—verse 214, warring in those months is pronounced "grievous," but "to obstruct the way to the Holy Temple, and to expel his people thence, is more grievous with God. Tempting (to idolatry) is more grievous than slaughter."

The above expedition is considered by early authors of great importance; for, in it, the "first booty was taken by Moslems, the first captives seized, and the first life taken." (Ibn Hisham). Here also Abdallah received the title "Commander of the faithful" which was later assumed by Omar, and then by Ali and other Caliphs.

HOSTILITY between Koreish and the Moslems grew, which led to the first verse revealed (Sura XXII and Sura II—verse 212) wherein the faithful are permitted to "fight in the way of God with them that fight against you." "Yet fight not against them beside the Holy Temple until they fight with you thereat."

Those who look upon the sword as the sole instrument for the spread of Islam should recall the cruel expulsion of Muhammad and his people by the Meccans and the unprovoked attacks which the latter made upon them.

The believers who died during such battles were promised paradise. But the victories gained by Islam were attributed to help from God, and not to human efforts. Muhammad offered death in the way of God as a blessing which every true believer should seek at need. For "God needeth nothing, but ye are needy. If ye turn back . . . God will raise a people other than you."

These verses were addressed to "Refugees" as well as the "Citizens," some of whom had already taken part in the expeditions against the Meccan caravans. But the first time in which the "Citizens" joined in a large number was on the battlefield of Bedr, and this attached them further to the cause of Islam.

(*To be continued*)

FEAR NOT!

ORCELLA REXFORD

"Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear."

ALL of us, at some time in our lives, have been affected by fear in some of its myriad forms. Each has his own type of fear. It may have been as a child when one dreaded to leave the cozy warmth of the family circle to crawl between cold sheets, upstairs alone in the dark; or it may have been the panicky feeling of one's first day at school; of meeting strangers for the first time; the fear of failing in examinations; of forgetting the piece one had to "speak on Friday," or that one's best girl would walk home from school with a rival. These may all seem trivial as viewed in retrospect at maturity, for then problems seem so much greater, especially those connected with mating and marriage, of finding employment or fears for the children. We are perpetually afraid of something or someone, it seems. Much of it results from having had fear drilled into us as children, for the old education was based on negative methods. One of the greatest crimes is to instill fear into children for it affects their growth mentally, morally and physically and starts them on the road to defeat. The major fears are of poverty, sickness, death, criticism, old age, and loss of love.

In the world today we see these results of the dominance of fear; nation arming against nation, capital fearful of labor, labor fearful of capital; people afraid to invest their money, business afraid to expand. Our present chaos and decline in civilization may be traced to fear. The hearts of mankind today are bowed down with fear—fear of the future, of impending calamities, of one another. Truly, the "only thing we have to fear is fear."

Fear is a specter which dogs the footsteps of most people from the cradle to the grave. It is spawned from a painful emotion, springing from a threatened danger or evil, accompanied by a desire to flee from it.

At the heels of this parent Fear travel a brood of little fears known as "Bugaboos," which swarm about like gnats that try to get into one's

eyes and nose and sting their victim. These are seldom realized as being related to Fear, yet their stings can be no less annoying when they produce mental or emotional reactions. Their names are legion yet some of the most familiar in their effects upon the individual are: Dread, which causes hesitation and distrust of the future; Apprehension, which is similar to Dread, but which only produces more agitation and nervous conditions; Disquietude, a twin to worry, concerned with the future, causing lack of peace, unrest and unhappiness; Pessimism, very dark-colored, producing hopelessness and dejection, gloom and a despondent outlook, magnifying evil and sorrow; Dissatisfaction, causing fretfulness, whining, making one difficult to please and easily disappointed; Timidity — small and trembling, yet its sting produces faintheartedness and diffidence; Grief, bows down its victim and "breaks the heart," causing the spirit to droop; Anxiety, the anticipation of a possible misfortune or some uncertain future event, solicitude and foreboding of evil; Despondency, the sting of which produces a feeling of hopelessness, pessimism, discouragement, despair and the "blues;" Suspicion, awakens distrust, conjecture, jealousy, skepticism; Consternation and Dismay are the most violent of all, causing the mind to become confused, the heart discouraged and the future fraught with helpless terror; Panic, excessively active, producing a frantic condition, often experienced by large numbers of people over a trifling cause or no cause at all; Worry, particularly harrassing and annoying—producing vexation, depression and perplexity; Cowardice, makes one unwilling to face difficulties, to be "soft," to "lose one's nerve," to "show the white feather," to be spineless and skittish; Anger, invites resentment, indignation, revenge, fury, rage, impulsiveness, fierceness and exasperation; Moroseness, a sullen, crabby feeling, making one peevish, cross, sour, surly, cantankerous, restless and glum; Remorse burdens the mind, filling one with regret, anguish, dishonor, disgrace, causing one to become conscience-stricken and full of self-condemnation; Vacillation makes the mind fluctuate and waver, producing unsteadiness of character, halfheartedness, inconstancy, indecision, "blowing hot and cold," double-minded; Horror, a terrified fear, tinged with shuddering and repulsion; Fright which is sudden, shocking and usually not lasting, and finally, Terror, stark, violent and overwhelming.

Fear and its brood are "hang-overs" from our animal heritage and primitive ancestors who found themselves in a great world, little of which they comprehended. Forced on every side to protect themselves from dangers that beset them, fear was a form of self-protection. Fear was a friend that prompted them to action. It caused them to take the aggressive. But these primitive and childish fears are out of place in the human world.

"God planted Fear in the soul," says Henry Ward Beecher, "as truly as he planted hope or courage. It is a kind of bell or gong which rings the mind with quick life and avoidance on the approach of danger—it is the soul's signal for rallying."

This is the constructive side of the picture. Whenever Fear attacks us, it is a sign that we should get active and do something about it. We can be thankful for the warning, obey it, but not let it become our master, but rather let it be our servant. It is natural that life should be full of problems. They are there to exercise our moral fibre, but as cares develop, there should likewise develop the knowledge of how to solve them. This unfortunately is not the case. Fear begotten of ignorance and uncertainty holds us back. Fears are allowed to pursue children and youth and little practical experience is given to help them solve the problems of vocation, marriage and adulthood around which cluster Fear and its brood. All the training they receive is more or less negative, emphasizing the dangers rather than the opportunities surrounding them, so that life seems weighted down by obstacles too difficult to meet.

How one faces these problems, determines the life one lives. Some enjoy battling with them and triumphantly head toward victory, others have grown hardened to them. Some try to ignore or dodge them. but the imaginative, idealistic type shrinks from the horrible aspect of them as too weighty to be borne. Others come to dread every opportunity as concealing some disappointment and in an effort to placate the "jinx" console themselves with saying, "I wonder what this will bring—there is always *something.*" This something is a foreboding of disaster which may only be an added care, a real accident, a heart-ache or a calamity.

What can be done about it all? No improvement in a person's condition can be made until one comes to the realization that in dealing with Fear one is dealing with the spiritual challenge of the ages.

Knowledge and faith, are essential. We must study our fears. Of what are we afraid? It is generally the unknown. We must first know that we have the power to drive off fear and all its brood, to become master of our thoughts and to shake off these annoying parasites, looking them squarely in the face and telling them to go,—hence. It is useless to argue with fears, but with the determination to be free of them comes strength to drive them away.

What attracts these fears? A problem arising which we are unwilling to face and a childish desire to "run away" takes place. With it goes a state of tension, and the brain is in a state of nervous excitement, even though one may not be aware of it consciously, for Fear finally comes to make its home with us in the realm of the sub-conscious. This tension drains the brain of its proper strength and interrupts the circulation and is a breeder of disease. Dropping resistance to an idea, to be willing that the thing feared shall happen, relaxes the tension on the nerves and brain and opens the channels for a freer circulation, which will carry off the morbid condition, permitting new powers to flow through which will give strength to master the situation.

If you would experience what Fear does to you, consciously, hold your

fist as tight as you can for ten minutes. The fatigue you feel when you relax is a proof of the amount of energy you have been wasting. If this were continued for hours the waste of energy would be proportionately increased. This is slight in comparison to the tension produced in the brain and nerves in useless fears over a lifetime. No wonder that some people are perpetually tired, carrying a load of fears, a strain which drains the energies of the greater proportion of mankind. Thus did the prophets advise man, and not in vain, "resist not evil." The practice of Radiant Acquiescence, the dropping of resistance to the necessary problems of life, of yielding to them joyfully in the sense that whatever comes we shall know how to meet it, will create a confidence that will attract a solution. To drop resistance, to relax against an evil, produces a great and wonderful change. Our will can then accomplish the rest. To fear is to attract the thing we fear.

THE greatest breeder of fear in the past has been religion. God as pictured to our ancestors is responsible for the condition the world finds itself in today, with its myriad fears. He was painted as a negative god, a personal god, endowed with all the destructive attributes of man; an avenging god, who visits troubles upon you, who chooses to deprive you of the good things in this life that you might be rewarded in the next. The primitive attribute of torture seems to be his only function; he smites the hand with paralysis that earns your living; he snatches your loved ones from you just when you are enjoying them the most.

An atheist described her condition when she said, "I cannot believe in the God of the religionists, he is always 'tracking one down.' I feel that I can get along very well to run my own affairs, free from his interference."

But we can make no progress in conquering our arch-enemy, Fear, without religion. H. G. Wells sounds for us the solution:

"Religion is the first thing and the last thing. Until man has found God and been found by God, he begins at no beginning and he arrives at no end."

What does religion imply? Faith in God, and faith is the antidote for Fear. "Faith," says 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "is conscious knowledge and the practice of good deeds. Whoever has faith has not fear, he who has fear is not severed."

"It is first to know and then to do."

"The beginning of all things," says Bahá'u'lláh, "is the knowledge of God, and the end of all things is strict observance of what has been sent down from the empyrean of the Divine Will."

We begin, then, in our mastery of fear with learning about the true nature of God. "We know God easily if we do not constrain ourselves to define him," says Joubert.

"How wondrous is the unity of the Living, the Ever-Abiding God—a unity which is exalted above all limitations, that transcendeth the comprehension of all created things!" proclaims Bahá'u'lláh. "He hath from everlasting dwelt in His inaccessible habitation of holiness and glory, and

will unto everlasting continue to be enthroned upon the heights of His independent sovereignty and grandeur. How lofty hath been His incorruptible Essence, how completely independent of the knowledge of all created things, and how immensely exalted will it remain above the praise of all the inhabitants of heaven and earth."

"God," says Jenabe Fazel, "is the spirit of all atoms' existence, the soul of the universe, and is the universal, directive intelligence and power ruling through all phenomena. If you dissect the amobea, the lowest form of protoplasmic life, you will find therein the greatest laboratory of God's creation. The symmetry of plant life, the beauty of animal life, the stars revolving in their orbits, every electron in this vast creation, in the human kingdom; each one of these things tells the story of a creator whose power and dominion is infinite, boundless and limitless. God is that Almighty Creator, that universal Sun of Truth, whose power and authority and majesty all these has created."

We learn further about the nature of God by studying and meditating on the attributes of God as revealed in the prayers by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Bahá'u'lláh. Some of these attributes are: "the Majestic, the Living, the Forgiver, the Compassionate, the All-Seeing, the All-possessing, the All-Powerful, the Loving, the Supplier of All Necessities, the All-Sufficient, the Clement, the Gracious, the Incomparable Friend, the Shepherd of the world, my Awakener, my Inspiration, my Hope, my Substainer, God of all the worlds, All Wise, the Help in Peril, the Lord of this life and the next." "There is none that can deal bountifully with me, to whom I can turn my face, and none that can have compassion on me that I may crave his mercy except the King of all Kings."

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." We must learn why there can be "none else" than He, and we must try to comprehend the magnitude of His love and power that operates through His law of good. "God is an unutterable sigh in the inmost depths of the soul."

The deepest need of the human heart today is to know God. But we are told by Bahá'u'lláh that the "way to the Creator is barred." But this need not discourage us since He has provided a perfect man as the Manifestation of God (who, in this Age is Bahá'u'lláh), to lead and instruct us. The prophets are revealers of the Divine essence for it is an abstract thing until it takes on form and then it shows as the perfections of the Manifestation. Bahá instructs us, "I am the instrument that continually imparteth unto all beings the blessings with which He who is the Source of all Grace hath entrusted me—and a wealth that supplieth the needs of all humanity."

If the best minds of the human race should sit down and construct a God whom they would like to see in the flesh, His moral and spiritual likeness would gradually form into Bahá'u'lláh, for that God would have to be like Bahá'u'lláh, the highest expression of God that man has seen in this Age. Bahá'u'lláh is the

human life of God, the pure mirror reflecting His attributes. Man needs a goal for the building of character and that goal is Bahá'u'lláh. Today we are being guided into real truth, for as Jesus said, "When He has come, the Spirit of Truth—He will guide you unto all Truth."

Our only refuge from fear then, is Faith in God, and our spiritual self; "God doesn't fail us, we fail Him." "Save for the refuge and protection of the Most High," says 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "man is without shelter." "My security is in my Creator, not in His creation." "God is love, he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him."

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." We never fear a person or thing until we have ascribed power to it, which is to endow it with the quality of a god. So when Fear attacks you, turn to the truth that one fears because one does not fully realize that there is no power in anything but good—but God, and God is love, and "love worketh no ill." Say to yourself when fear attacks you, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" "For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart —he shall have whatsoever he saith." This mountain may be one of fear, or remorse, worry or the whole pack of "Bugaboos" weighting down your consciousness like a mountain which obscures from your view the land of peace and happiness. So with one word of faith, one word of command—you command this mountain which prevents your happiness, to be removed and cast into oblivion. Say to your fears, "Get thee hence, you have had your day, you have had a good time with me, but no more. Now I am going to have my good time, in the Light of God that never fails. Peace! be still."

We develop our faith in unknown things through acquaintance and association with those who have found it helpful. Read about the life 'Abdu'l-Bahá lived, since He is our exemplar. Few have done the things that He did because few have developed and directed their faith as He did. His whole life was devoted to it. He spent long hours in meditation and prayer. He had learned to unify his thought forces with those of the spirit.

Gladstone was once asked, what kept him so serene and composed in his busy life: He replied, "At the foot of my bed, where I can see it on retiring and arising in the morning, are the words, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." It is excellent mental therapeutics to follow that old method called the "practice of the presence of God." "To pray is to trust God." Doubt cuts one off. Prayer is the most effective and powerful fear remover. "Prayer is conversation with God." Prayer clears the channel, brushes away the fears, so that the spiritual force can flow in and become the central driving power of your life. Spiritual force is real or it is nothing. It is a power in the world as definite as electricity. When the channel is

cleared light breaks forth on your problems, and with the release of them, there comes a glory as with the sun shining early in the morning. What is the result of praying? That is the test. Unless there is light we have not cleared the channel. The light proves the clearing. "When the sincere servant calls to me in prayer," states Bahá'u'lláh "I become the ear with which he heareth my reply." Look not at appearances. When there has been an answer to prayer in the invisible there comes a joyous abandon, and a feeling that it has been decreed. The most great Peace abideth within. "Nothing happens to any man which he is not formed by nature to bear," Marcus Aurelius tells us.

THERE is a dynamic power that comes from God known as the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit," according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá "brings to man perfection and inspiration. The Holy Spirit touches the heart of man and awakens him to eternal life. It gives to man all possibilities. The cause of life widens before his eyes; eternity opens to him and becomes his, and every moment is his inviolable possession. Limitations disappear, and he becomes more and more sensitive to the teachings of the Holy Spirit. All things are his own." Then again He assures us "The captive of the Holy Spirit is freed from every captivity."

As we come into conscious knowledge we learn about the mysteries of ourselves. There is then a life principle animating the universe. We see it working through every phase of existence and adapting itself in its evolutionary progress to every problem and obstacle that besets its path, for coexistent with it is a conquest principle as well. Nature wherever thwarted develops a compensatory factor. For one kind of danger it protects itself with a shell, for another a poison, another a sting or a camouflaged coloring. To breathe in the sea it develops gills, on land it develops lungs. If glaciers beset it, fur grows, if tropical heat comes, it grows hair and feathers. If it has to live in the water it webs the feet. The monkey that swings from limb to limb grows a tail and long arms. The river blocked in its course winds around its obstacle and cuts new channels. Everywhere we see the persistence of this vital force meeting its obstacles, compensating for them, surviving, winning through with a singleness of purpose. Everywhere are difficulties to be overcome, but these are only summons for the release of greater energies.

In man's long upward climb, in his battle with the elements, with the wild beasts and his fellow man, the life principle, this vital force, is ever persisting, ever seeking higher forms. All of these can be seen as incentives for progress. Had there been no problems, no difficulties to overcome, man would have remained primitive and animalistic where he was. Trials, troubles, obstacles in our way are not then to be dreaded or feared, rather to be welcomed as opportunities that our spirit may wrestle with, overcome, and carve out new channels for greater release of energies. Whatever appears as difficulties summons us to action, and action is life, and judging

from the past, life never dodges the challenge. We can form the habit of winning out over our problems as we can form any other habit, and the more we conquer, the easier it is to conquer. We are superior to our dangers only as we possess a power to cope with them. This power, the Holy Spirit, which has gone to the trouble to create us a dynamic, living, breathing being, evolving us through the eons of time, is not going to fail us now that we have immediate use for it.

Fear and all its brood is spawned from ignorance. We only fear what we don't know or understand; in itself it is not real. It becomes real only as we invite it and give it power over us. It is a shadow that follows us for protection if we are the master. But if we have turned ourselves toward fear and are following it, then it is the master. All we need to do is to change our direction.

"I long had sought a place
Where shadows could not find me,
And then I found the light and lo
My shadows fell behind me."

Fear shuts off the flow of the Holy Spirit. Faith releases its energies, this vital force, to work for us. When it is not needed it is quiescent like water in a pipe, which is given an outlet, only when needed, by turning on the tap. "Is not every need you have a challenge to your faith? Is not every need like a divine voice asking you, "Cannot I sustain you?" In the loving omnipotence of God there lies the way out of every situation. Bahá'u'lláh reminds us, "The healer of all thy difficulties is remembrance of Me, forget it not." Permit your faith to rise to the challenge that the difficulty presents. When fear lays hold of your soul and grips you in its icy chill and calls "whence?" answer quickly, "God!"

For a long time the religious world had been weakened and materialism had advanced; the spiritual forces of life were waning, moralities were becoming degraded, composure and peace had vanished from souls and satanic qualities were dominating hearts; strife and hatred overshadowed humanity, bloodshed and violence prevailed. God was neglected; the Sun of Reality seemed to have gone completely; deprivation of the bounties of heaven was a fact; and so the season of winter fell upon mankind. But in the generosity of God a new springtime dawned, the lights of God shone forth, the effulgent Sun of Reality returned and became manifest, the realm of thoughts and kingdom of hearts became exhilarated, a new spirit of life breathed into the body of the world and continuous advancement became apparent.—

'Abdu'l-Bahá.

NEW SONGS OF ZION

MAYE HARVEY GIFT

"Let the New Follow the New"

The time of former things is past.
A new time hath been born,
When all things are made new through God's Command.

The New Jerusalem descends,
Adorned and beautified,
Wherein the Lord of all men hath appeared,
Like to the Pillar of celestial Fire.

This is the City of thy God,
Illumined by the Glory of the Lord.

Get thee new eyes that thou mayest see
God's splendorous handiwork;
A new heart that thou mayest enter now
Within the stronghold of His love;
New ears that hearken longingly
Unto the tones of His new Holy Law.

Thy Loving Father Calls

Be not prevented from thy God,
O child of Israel,
By hardships and calamities;
Nor be thou full of fear.

Hath the allure of wealth,
Or man's acclaim,
Brought surcease to thy wearied heart?
See in adversity His providence,
To test and purify;
To lead thee to thy Father's Throne;
And show thy scarce-believing sight
The mercies and the bounties He will give.

O recognize thy Glorious Lord!
Turn unto Him and live!

Rejoice With Everlasting Joy

Rejoice, rejoice, O child of Israel!
Give thanks and everlasting praise
Unto thy God;
The Glory of the Lord now stands revealed!
Haste from thy darkened corridors,
Into this glad new Day.
Enlist among the faithful and assured,
Who grasp the Cord of everlasting life.

None save God's glorious Sun of Truth
Can dissipate the gloomy night
Of persecution and despair,
And draw men into loving fellowship.

Unending peace abide with him
Who seeks the guidance of his Lord,
In this great Day of God.

Rejoice, again rejoice, thou child of Israel!

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND THE MODERN WORLD

T. L. VASWANI

NOT a little of what I may speak to you will have some autobiographical interest. Many years ago when I was a school-boy in Hyderabad there came once from Bihar, an elderly person. And I came in contact with him. He was a servant of God. He lived a quiet, beautiful life, and from time to time I met him. And he spoke to me of a number of things concerning the deeper values of life. And one day, I well remember, I heard his voice in my street. He came over to my ancestral house situated in a little lane; and standing there he called me! He called me by my personal name, which most of you do not know: you are familiar with my family name: but my proper, personal name you know not. He came, this servant of God; he called me in the little lane. And even as I heard the voice in my little room, I said to myself: "How is he here? But sure, 'tis he: he who has spoken to me of several things concerning the life of the spirit." I found him so true; so sincere and frank. One day, I well remember, he suddenly asked me: "Do you know who I am?" "I know a little about you," I said. "But do you know," he said to me, "I am the son of a *vaishya?*" And he told me how the grace of God had led him out of darkness into Light. He told me the story of his life, how he had from early days, dedicated himself to the service of God and the service of man. And on the day of which I speak, he said to me: "I come to take leave of you!" "And why?" I asked. "Tomorrow," he said, "I leave this place. Tomorrow I go." And I said to him: "Whither are you going?—you who have sung to me sweet songs of spiritual life." And he said: "I go; I start for Irán." And I asked: "Why do you go so far—leaving me, leaving India, why go you so far?" And he said: "I go, for in Irán hath appeared a Light: in Persia hath arisen a new Prophet of God!" That was my first link with the Bahá'í Faith.

Days passed on, and I came to Kar-

achi College. As an undergraduate, too, I was interested in the comparative study of religions. And one day I bought a book named "The Religions of the World." And I read in it the chapter on "Babism." And I began to know a little of the life and teachings of some of the Bahá'í leaders. I read the story of "Báb." That word means "Gate," "Door." And he, the first great Bahá'í Leader, was truly a "gate," a "door" of God's great mercy; for Báb became the very channel through which God poured His New Illumination. He was imprisoned and then executed. He was young, thirty years only, when he was cruelly put to death. He taught for no more than six years—from 1844 to 1850. And in these six years he taught—not so much through words as through the vibrations of his magnetic personality. The truly great ones are less vocal, more vibratory. This "God-man," this "God-intoxicated" man taught through the power of his life, so rich in sacrifice. He spoke of one who was to come after him — "the Glory of God." And such an one appeared. Bahá'u'lláh, you call him, and that word, "Bahá'u'lláh," means the "Splendor of God." I read the story of his life too — a moving story. I read of how he was dispossessed of his property and driven into exile; at Baghdád and then at Akká.

MANY years passed, and Providence called me to cross the seas to give India's message to the West. I went to Germany first: in Berlin was held the great World Congress of Religions—where I spoke as one of India's representatives. And from Germany I passed on to England. And on the eve of my departure from Great Britain, as I was reading a thoughtful paper, the "Christian Commonwealth" of London — mine eyes rested upon one picture in that paper. I gazed at this picture again and again. It is difficult to forget the picture. It was a calm, meditative face: on it was the print of the "Most Great Peace:" it was the face of one whose meditation expressed itself in work, in service, in sacrifice. It was the face of a mystic—a practical mystic—'Abdu'l-Bahá.

I read, too, the story of that great woman, the greatest woman of Irán—one of the greatest women, I believe, of the world. The story of Quarratu'l-'Ayn, "the Consolation of the Eyes." She was so radiant: so rich in the gifts of life. She had the gift of beauty; she had the gift of a rich mind; she had the eloquence and devotion, and she had the gift of courage. She threw off the veil. She claimed liberty for herself; she claimed liberty for the womenfolk of the world. She wrote wonderful poems: she gave wonderful speeches. A poetess, an orator, she was a great teacher, a great inspirer. And God gave her to wear the crown of martyrdom. And even as I read the story of her martyrdom, there were tears in my eyes. Quarratu'l-'Ayn, I regard, in some ways, incomparable; I salute her as one of the immortals of history.

There awoke a longing in my heart that I might go out of India to Palestine. For in Palestine is the shrine of my *Gurudev*—Jesus. And in Palestine is Mount Carmel where are the tomb-shrines of God's Messengers

of Mercy, the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá; while across the bay nine miles by way of the sea coast, is Akká and close to it is Bahji where Bahá'u'lláh is laid to rest. And in Palestine, too, is Haifa where is the homeland of the Bahá'í community. Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, lives in Haifa. The dream of a pilgrimage to Palestine is in my heart still. May the dream be one day fulfilled.

WHY do I feel drawn to the Bahá'í Faith? Not merely as a student of comparative religions, but as a student of modern life, I am drawn to this world-wide movement. There are five features of the Bahá'í Faith, the Bahá'í Teachings, which have great fascination for me. And if you will permit me to keep you a little longer, I shall very briefly refer to these five, and so indicate the relation of the Bahá'í Faith to the modern world.

(1) The Bahá'í Faith believes, as I believe, that *the problem of the modern world is, essentially, a spiritual problem.* Purely political solutions are inadequate. Inadequate, too, is the economic solution of the problem. The problem of the modern world must be solved in the power of the Spirit. It is a spiritual solution the modern world is seeking. Many years ago, there appeared a great thinker whose name has run round the world. Marx is his name, and he offered an "economic interpretation of history." Marx's "economic" interpretation of life and history was taken up by Lenin. He incorporated it in his theory of "dialectical materialism." "Religion is an opium," he said. Where are we today? This economic interpretation of history has several elements of truth in it, I know. But it is inadequate. This exclusively "economic" interpretation of history has ended in "class conflict" and violence. Lenin resolutely, frankly, courageously, enthusiastically espoused the cause of "violence." And Europe, today, is wandering from violence to violence. Europe is unhappy. The hunger of man cannot be assuaged by economics, by wealth, by motor-cars and radio sets. The modern world is hungering for a spiritual solution. Listen to the words of an eminent Western thinker of today, Professor Jung. He is an eminent student of psycho-analysis and a distinguished doctor. To him come patients from different parts of Europe; to him come those specially, who suffer from nerve diseases. Men and women come to this eminent thinker, this famous doctor, this profound psychologist. Listen to his words, the words which he wrote the other day in an Italian journal. Professor Jung writes in the course of his article: "Men and women today are hungering and thirsting for the spiritual." And then he proceeds to point out how this hunger may be appeased, how this thirst may be quenched. Listen, once again, to Professor Jung's words. He says: "Be receptive! Pay heed to the Divine within you. Understand the Will of God! Do not listen to the voice of the mass. Your life has an inward significance." This is Professor Jung's message: "Go within!" It is the message proclaimed, reproclaimed about a century ago by Bahá'u'lláh. Read that little book

which is worth its weight in gold, the book named "The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh." A wonderful book! A veritable treasure of Wisdom! Speaking to man, the Lord says in this beautiful Bahá'í Scripture: "Thy heart is My home: sanctify it for My descent!" In another passage of this same wonderful book I read the following words: "Possess a pure and radiant heart!" The emphasis in the teaching is upon the *heart*—upon the inner values of life. Life's problems have *spiritual* solution.

(2) The second feature of the Bahá'í Faith which fascinates me is *"Brotherhood of Religions."* The true Bahá'í believes that religions are not rivals. The world has suffered much, for there has been wrangling in the name of religion. And, believe me, where there is wrangling there is sectarianism; and sectarianism is the death of spiritual life; in all religions really is one Revelation. And, the Revelation of the Spirit is a growing, evolving reality. There is an underlying unity of world religions: one is the foundation of all religions: one is the inspiration of all Scriptures and one the illumination of all prophets and saints.

(3) *Harmony of Science and Religion*: there you have the third fascinating feature of the Bahá'í Faith. We live in a scientific age,—an age which is developing, more and more its reflective consciousness. And in this age when the power of thinking is growing,—in this age it will not do to offer to the world creeds and traditions which will not stand the test of reason. The modern world refuses to accept them. Creeds are broken reeds, and dogmas divide and separate. The modern world needs a *unifying* religion,—a religion which will answer the needs of our reflective, scientific consciousness. The Bahá'í Faith does well to emphasize that science and religion should be in harmony with each other. And it seems to me that as science advances farther and farther, it approaches nearer and nearer the realities of religion: and as religion is trying to understand life better and better, religion is becoming more and more scientific. I am reminded of a distinguished scientist of our times: he presided at the Indian Science Congress in Calcutta: a man of international fame, Sir James Jeans. And in his remarkable book, "The Mysterious Universe," he makes a remarkable declaration; he says the world reveals a "Mathematical Thinker." Here is a statement of a great scientist in support of the essential idea of religion. I recall, too, the words of another scientist, greater even than Sir James Jeans,—the great thinker who won, many years ago, the Nobel Prize in Physics. His name has travelled round the world, for he has given the world a new theory: the theory of Relativity. This great man Einstein said: "There is an Infinite, Mysterious Energy that holds the constellations." Yes,—in the New Cycle, the New Age that has opened, science and religion are approaching each other on a new plane of understanding and sympathy.

(4) The fourth feature of the Bahá'í Faith is: how may I speak of it? *A new civilization, a brotherly civilization!* That is what the world

is crying for. The one piteous, urgent need of the nations is a new brotherly civilization. The world is in ferment. There are processes of break-up in Asia and in the West, and the longing is growing for a new brotherly civilization. No creed of narrow nationalism is adequate to the problem of building a new social order, a new civilization. Modern Germany is dominated by a cult of "racialism." The new cycle, the new age, calls not for racialism but for *Humanity,* aye for something greater even than humanity: work ye for the *Cosmos!* A new civilization, a brotherly civilization must be built in *cosmic consciousness;* and the way to a new World Order is not violence but love. This is what is emphasized in the Bahá'í Scripture: "O friends of God! Be ye manifestations of the Love of God," is the vital message of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

(5) *Emancipation and education of woman* is the fifth fascinating feature of the Bahá'í Faith; but my time is up. I recall the words of the great German poet, Goethe: "The woman soul will lead us upward, on!" So believe I: the woman-soul will lead us on! Man has had his chance and man has bungled: man has blundered. And look! Civilization lies broken and bleeding! Let woman have a chance to remold civilization; for woman has intuition, devotion, sacrifice: woman has the spirit of love.

MUCH would I say of the Bahá'í Message but there is no time to tell. It seems to me the great message of the Bahá'í Faith is a reproclamation of the wisdom of the ancient Rishis and the modern seers of science. It is the message of the great ones of humanity, the central message of world religions, the message of the One Life in all, the message of love. In the spirit of love is the beauty and power of the Bahá'í Movement. I have met but a few Bahá'í brothers and sisters: I know what love they have in their hearts. And it seems to me that a new World Order—a Divine Humanity will not be built except through the power of Love. This Love is the white and holy Light of suns and systems star-lit, bright. This Love is the Life of West and East: and in Love's "Great Peace" will the nations meet. And in the name of Love, I offer you all the salutation of my spirit. And I thank you all again for the loving hearing you have given to my humble message tonight.

An address given at Bahá'í Hall, Karachi, India, June 22, 1938.

KNOWLEDGE IS A LIGHT

CLAUDIA COLES ALDRIDGE

"KNOWLEDGE is a light which God sheds in whatsoever heart He willeth." In the Tablet of Iqan, from the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh, it is written, "The above knowledge is praiseworthy; not the limited learnings produced by veiled and obscured imaginations, which men often steal from each other, then glory over their fellow-creatures. We hope, if it please God, a breeze of mercy may blow and the tree of existence be clothed with a new robe through the divine spring that we may apprehend the mysteries of the divine wisdom and through His providence become independent of the knowledge of all things." These words confuse the average mind, fastened as it so often is, on the crystallized beliefs of reputed men of learning, unwilling to assume its own responsibility of unfettered thinking, which, according to Bahá'u'lláh, is one of the fundamental principles of Faith. He says that justice demands that we know of our own understanding, and not see through the eyes of others. Never, in the history of the world, has there been such a call to the individual conscience, coupled with the imperative demand that such thinking be entirely altruistic in its aims, entirely devoted to the public weal, in order that all undertakings resulting from it, may be of benefit to the whole.

In this respect, license can be as grave an error, as the rigidity that has been so characteristic in our early psychological development. It is only in the last century that free-thinking has been the heritage, not only of the favored few, but for every man, woman, or child who cared to make the necessary effort. Bahá'ís believe that this expansion of the mind is due to a deepening of consciousness, a tangible result of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh. In other words, our minds have been as a malleable substance, upon which the Spirit has left indelible traces. Bahá'u'lláh explains the paradox. "Fear God, and God will teach you," and the statement, "Knowledge is the greatest veil." He says the fruits of the former are patience, longing, wisdom and love; while the latter are pride, vain-glory, and conceit.

Thus the qualities of the heart predominate over those of the mind — "for by their fruits ye shall know them." The selfless love for God would seem an essential preliminary to true wisdom, for "the melody of the divine world is sanctified above limitation by earthly hearing and minds." We cannot understand more than our capacity, therefore we must be truly sincere in our search, otherwise we cannot attract the truth to us. 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us we cannot be truly sincere until we are wholly detached from this world. One must be somewhat of an ascetic in living if one is ever to attain ultimate truth. This is the unequivocal demand science has made to her followers, and the ardor with which she has been obeyed, is only too apparent in our material advancement. That she has been as ready to deal out lethal instruments as instruments of corresponding beneficial value, is due to lack of guidance in moral development. The fundamental urge has been translated into wrong channels. Here again mere knowledge of data has been proved insufficient to prevent wrong-doing, for the commercial value of an article has superseded its menace of danger to the community. What is necessary is not the suppression of the instinct to produce but the opening of hitherto unexplored territories in that direction. A new vision is required, a new goal infinitely preferable to the former limited one—a goal so dazzling in its outlook as to sweep away all summary attempts at suppression.

If on presentation of our thesis of production for the good of all, enslaved mankind persists in still treading the ancient path, we need not be too quick to condemn. People's minds are not always opened by mere recitation of the truth, there is often an essential preliminary—completely out of our scope—suffering. It is not for us, sinners that we are, despite our earnest efforts, to hastily judge another of God's creatures, much less such an aggregate collection as a nation. God has His rights, as Supreme Judge, all else save Him are but the jury. His Word is binding, yet He has never enslaved us. In this, let us learn from Him. Even His calamity is in reality His providence. Indeed He is slow to wrath, as His lovers have ever witnessed. There is but one occasion in which an individual may supersede the law of mercy, or forgiveness, by the law of justice. This is when, according to his capacity, he is elected by universal suffrage, as in the Bahá'í Administration, to become the recipient of the bounty of Divine Guidance, and to adjucate and execute according to the exigencies of the time, not for the benefit of any particular individual, but for the general advancement and well-being of the whole. The staggering responsibility of such a position must place him time and again on the horns of a dilemma, in which his own feeling of sympathy and understanding for a delinquent battles for supremacy with his mature judgment on the relative rightness of such an action in relation to the whole. This struggle between the emotional nature and the result of long deliberations in relation to the problem awaiting decision, has been the theme for many of the world's greatest dramas. The age-

long problem, love or duty? The division between these two has saddened more hearts, confused the noblest of minds, and yet lent distinction to otherwise commonplace lives. For whenever this problem has arisen, it gains pre-eminence over all others, for the world sees in its concrete example, the question it has so often fought on the lesser battle-ground of its own soul. Is there a solution? Can a mean be reached, in which the emotional nature is satisfied, while confident that the right ruling is being established, which will stamp out recurrences of such wrong-doing from the body-politic?

The answer would seem to be an impossible one for human ingenuity to answer and can we doubt that this is indeed the case. What man can claim to possess the necessary solvent to integrate the diverse elements in his own nature? In order to judge any situation aright one must assume the position of impartial observer, in other words be from the outside, looking in. What man can claim to surround the reality of any other creature? To be in the position of a completely impartial observer? He is, alas, only too often entangled in his own psychological mesh and far from being an impartial observer of his own frailties, which he mistakes for virtues, and vice versa. Only One who possesses the inherent virtue of encompassing the realities of existent beings, can claim to make the great Diagnosis, which will contain the ultimate truth on that problem. Thus through humility, we voluntarily release ourselves, from an intangible quest, pursued by great thinkers the world over—"What are we?" Let us turn without hesitation to the one great Authority on the subject, the chosen Revealer of the Word of God. He alone can resolve our problem. His Words are: "To whatever heights the mind of the most exalted of men may soar, however great the depths which the detached and understanding heart can penetrate, such mind and heart can never transcend that which is the creature of their own conceptions and the product of their own thoughts. The meditations of the profoundest thinker, the devotions of the holiest of saints, the highest expressions of praise from either human pen or tongue, are but a reflection of that which hath been created within themselves, through the revelation of the Lord, their God. How can, therefore, the creature which the Word of God hath fashioned comprehend the nature of Him Who is the Ancient of Days?"

Is not this the great Physician speaking? What man in this century, despite his learning, can claim to attack the problem or dispense with it, in such manner? Only the Word of God contains the authority to change lives, all others may aggravate the symptoms, or even mistaking the symptoms for the root cause, adjudicate accordingly. Surely we can never be too humble on this score. When we are elected to a social body, we become responsible to God for any results in which our judgment has been concerned, not to the individuals who have elected us. This is the greatest concept that has ever existed in the world. We are the privileged participants in the working out of its in-

numerable functions. The high honor of our calling presupposes complete purity of motive and lack of all self-regarding impulses. Otherwise how are we to be fit instruments for His Purpose? How else is it conceivable that we could be fit representatives of the many trusting and self-sacrificing members, responsible for our election? In a prayerful attitude we commence deliberations, then frank and earnest consultation prevails. What a high order of thinking must invariably predominate in such an atmosphere.

Consider the effect when this is the method of procedure in all affairs of state. Is it inconceivable that only laws of equity could be passed? That fundamental disease of the body-politic, lack of altruism, would become a thing forgotten. In such an atmosphere petty ambitions are laid aside to be supplanted by visions of such magnitude that the whole human race as one vast organism is considered. It is not that the great law of mercy is ignored for the justice of God has always been equal opportunities for all. Yet this justice, itself, is the greatest mercy of all did we perceive it, for this safeguarding of the rights of all is our own greatest safeguard and standby in time of need. What benefits all is what benefits us. However, those in authority must use every effort to assure us of the wisdom behind it. If they are truly sincere in their outlook, there is no doubt that they will influence those as yet unconvinced. But when can we be said to be truly sincere? 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures us unequivocally that we can *never* be said to be truly sincere while our hearts are still attached to the world. So the ultimate criterion for the sphere of our influence over others must be the extent to which we have purified ourselves of animal traits and assumed the mantle of sanctity. Thus as imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the only lasting effect we can have for good on the life of another, is to essay ourselves to be so good that perforce others are found admiring these qualities, desiring to be likewise. We are told that: "Whoever desires to teach anyone must first teach his own self," otherwise his words will have no influence over his listeners. Thus the extent of the radius of our capacity for service is proportionate to our own self-development and this must be the only worthwhile goal in any field. "First conscious knowledge, then the practise of good deeds." *First* things *first.*

What a high calling, what immeasurable sacrifice is entailed, for to be cleansed of all dross we must surely experience the fire of suffering. Only then do we become like unto shining mirrors. Truly God is more with us than we would suppose, in this respect. At every cross-road we are faced with the age-old question. "Why must such untold suffering assail a worthwhile person?" "Where is the seeming justice behind it?" But when we realize that no soul is exempt from this great law, each in turn experiences dire vicissitudes and suffering. Then we begin to sense an universal law, all are involved, and our bitterness is transmuted to a burning desire to be a worker in any plan to forward the progress of humanity as a whole.

THE PATH TO SELFLESSNESS

ZOE MEYER

It is one of the paradoxes of life that the path to selflessness lies through the gate of knowledge of self.

To the one who is contented to skim the surface of understanding, the path means a conscious striving not to think of himself or herself, a striving after humility. As a matter of fact that very effort necessarily keeps the consciousness upon self. The earnest student of spiritual life must go deeper—into the depths of himself. Only through the knowledge thus acquired will he learn selflessness.

Bahá'u'lláh says, "He hath known God who hath known himself." Also: Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves—a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being."

In other words, an examination into the deeps of self finds God. This does not mean that a bit of God lies in each human being. God is indivisible, unapproachable. There is, however, that Something which is more than the physical body, more than the emotions, more than the intellect. No examination of body or brain reveals it.

That scientist and earnest student of life's mysteries, Paul Brunton, gives an illustration of this fact: If the self were but the physical body, consciousness of self would be lost when the organism becomes unconscious in sleep. Yet it is not lost, for we waken with the same consciousness of self with which we fell asleep. Somewhere it persists beyond that period of sense unconsciousness. Much the same line of reasoning carries the thinker beyond emotion and intellect in his search for the meaning of self.

The physical body, therefore, is merely the vehicle which the self uses, a very temporary vehicle, and is entirely subservient to the self. Bahá'u'lláh tells us: "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is upon the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within

every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that Most Great Light."

Within a stone is a sign of God, revealing Him according to the capacity of the stone. Within the tree lies another sign, within the animal another, each according to the measure of its preordained capacity. God cannot be far distant when we see His sign in every atom of everything in earth and heaven. In man, then, the real self must be this "sign" of God within, that Something which transcends the physical and material.

Again the great Educator for this age admonishes: "And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves." Obviously, enshrined within each being lies this "sign" or Self. Through a lifetime, however, we become so accustomed to looking upon the physical body and brain as the self that finally true knowledge of it falls asleep, as it were, and is forgotten. Forgotten, that is, until some severe personal trial jolts us out of our little rut and we grope for something to which to cling. Then we search and, if we are sincere, find God and ourselves.

Here we have the great cycle of life which each individual must travel. He starts at the apex of the circle with God, the sign within his being. In infancy he begins his journey on the downward arc, through the stages of childhood, adolescence and young man and womanhood, each a circle within itself, until, at physical maturity, he reaches the lowest point of the arc. Thence he begins the ascent, again through circle after circle of experience, by which he acquires wisdom and a knowledge of the Self within. And at length he again finds God and makes his union with Him, a union impossible, we are told, save through suffering.

WORDSWORTH had not quite "forgotten." He says: "Our birth is but a sleep, and a forgetting" and proceeds to explain that we come from heaven "trailing clouds of glory" (knowledge of Self), which through the years gradually fade away "in the common light of day." One wonders why he did not go on and give us a vision of the ascending arc.

"All things," says Bahá'u'lláh, "in their inmost reality testify to the revelation of the names and attributes of God within them." God is the Source and, since there is no other source in all the universe, there is only the sign of God deep within. Hence it must follow that when we think of our real Self, the inner reality, we are thinking of a sign of God. Before that thought our own personality vanishes, automatically. During the time we live in this thought we are truly selfless, and only through the practise of this consciousness can we remain so. Prayer and meditation are our instruments.

Where does this consciousness carry us? First, we realize the important fact that, since the human body is but the vehicle the self uses in its journey through the material world, it is quite possible to live, here and now, in the world of Spirit—in the life of the sign of God within. We find it possible to go through life unaffected alike by the petty trials

and the great crises of material existence, thus acquiring that elusive but highly desirable triumvirate, poise, patience and peace.

Neither friends nor enemies can hurt us for there is no vulnerable point, no chink in the armor. In short, we realize that whatever happens to us is passing. Our Self can suffer no injury. The world has dubbed poet "dreamers," but again we find this vital truth expressed in immortal verse. Read again Kipling's "If," a glowing word-picture of selflessness. This state cannot be reached all at once after almost a lifetime of "forgetting," but *it can be done.*

In Hidden Words we find: "The healer of all thy ills is thy remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy all-precious treasure and cherish it even as thine own sight and life." We know that the physical body is subject to illness and pain, yet when we remember that we use it but for a time, and that inherent in us are the powers and attributes of God, we are enabled to rise superior to the physical organism; to know that illness cannot touch our Self. Then discomfort will either fall away, or we shall realize a greater blessing through its temporary persistence.

How about financial stress and worry, that great source of forgetting for a large proportion of humanity? 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "Human attitudes must not be limited, for God is unlimited and whosoever is the servant of the threshold of God must likewise be free from limitations." There is no limitation, then, in the inner Self. In other words, the way to financial freedom is to know that "There was God and there was nothing with Him;" to know that all we have is His, even life.

How often God is spoken of as the Bountiful, the Generous. And here is the Master's promise in His own words: "In brief, O ye friends of God, rest assured that in place of this contribution (to the Cause of God) your commerce, your agriculture and industries shall be blessed many times. Whosoever comes with one good act, God will give him tenfold. There is no doubt that the living Lord shall assist and confirm the generous soul."

It is a New Age with new ideas. As Bahá'ís it is encumbent upon us to dismiss old ideas of self and substitute for them the sign of God. Then shall there be none of us, but only God. We may live in this Idea just so long as we allow ourselves. The door is closed when thoughts of limitation persist, or when criticism, jealousy, personal ambition, etc., find entrance into the mind.

The one who knows Self need not strive after selflessness or humility, for he shall be the expression of these attributes. He shall know, too, the answer to his daily supplication, for the veils shall be burned away which have shut him out from God's beauty; and he shall walk in the Light that will lead him "unto the ocean of God's Presence."

Then, indeed, will he know the meaning and the end of life, for he shall have traversed the mystic circle, from God to God.

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